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439 Valley Drive NW
Floyd, VA 24091

April 18, 1999

The Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

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Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to urge you to do all you can to ~~enact~~ ^{enact} ~~enact~~ mandatory labeling requirements for all foods that are genetically engineered or that contain any genetically engineered ingredients. American citizens have an inalienable right to know what they are eating. Genetically engineered (GE) foods are substantially different from their traditional counterparts. Furthermore, there is scientific evidence that genetically engineered foods pose human health hazards.

The most common sources of genetically engineered food ingredients are soybean, corn and canola, crops for which Monsanto Corporation has patented and marketed "Roundup-Ready" (herbicide resistant) and "Bt" (manufacturing the Bt toxin against insects) varieties. Monsanto has created all of these trans-genic crops through the use of a gene vector called Cauliflower Mosaic Virus (CMV). CMV generates a foreign protein (never before present in the human diet) which toxicologists suspect may have contributed to the serious digestive tract damage in laboratory rats fed Bt-potatoes.

Dr. Arpad Pusztai of the United Kingdom, Dr. May-Won Ho, and other toxicologists around the world warn that the introduction of foreign proteins into the human diet is likely to cause serious allergic reactions. Foreign proteins include not only that of CMV, but also proteins from plants normally not eaten (e.g. petunia, often used by Monsanto) and the Bt toxin itself (present in ^{GE} potato and corn varieties now widely grown). In the United Kingdom, the incidence of human allergic reactions to soybean products increased abruptly in 1998 by 50 percent. 1998 is also the first year that the United Kingdom imported large amounts of GE soybeans from the United States.

Furthermore, FDA safety testing of recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) appears to have been incomplete. Health Canada (the Canadian counterpart of FDA) has decided to maintain its ban on rBGH use in Canadian cows, because additional studies have shown pathological changes in rats fed rBGH milk, and the milk itself contains four to five times as much IGF-1, a cancer-promoter in humans, as conventional milk.

Because of these dangers, citizens throughout Europe are now demanding clear labeling of all GE foods, and many large supermarket chains have decided to withdraw all foods containing GE ingredients from their shelves. The governments of the United Kingdom and most other European countries have responded to citizen demands for food safety by imposing labeling requirements on imported and domestic GE foods.

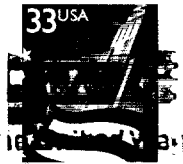
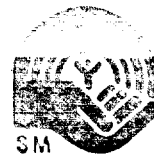
Mr President, the dangers are real, and the issue of citizens' rights to know is clearcut. Please stop pressuring British Prime Minister Tony Blair into accepting US grain shipments that contain GE grains. Please give your support to efforts toward mandatory labeling of GE foods, both in the US and abroad.

Yours sincerely,
Mark Schonbeck
Mark Schonbeck

cc: Vice President Al Gore
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THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON
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